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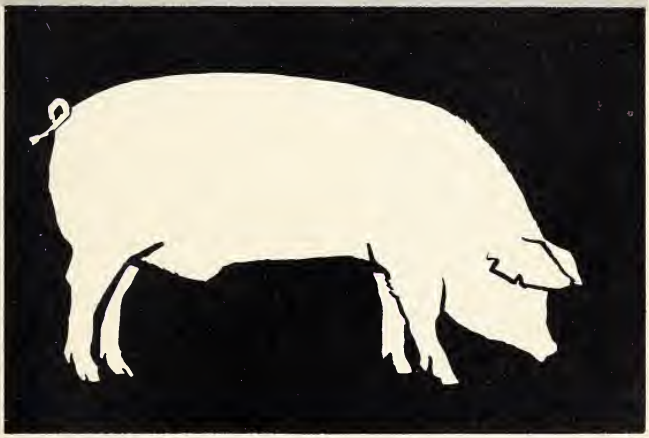
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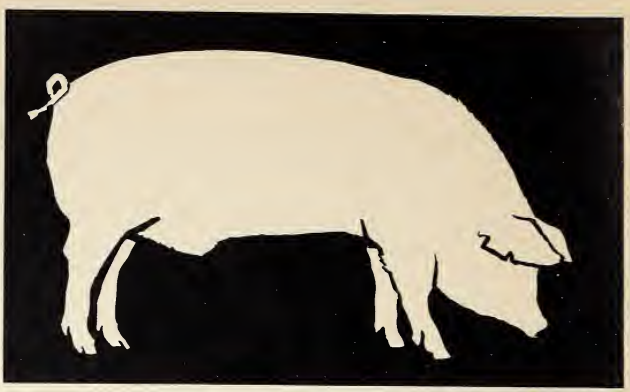
CASTRATION



Leaflet No. 473

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HOG
CASTRATION





N32311

The solid line shows where to make the incision between the testicles. The dotted lines show the location of the testicles.

Castration is the removal of the testicles from the male and the ovaries from the female.

Pigs are castrated to maintain the quality of the meat, to prevent uncontrolled breeding, and to prevent the development of boar odor or flavor that occurs in the cooked meat of an uncastrated male.

As a result of castration, male pigs take on the appearance of a sow rather than a boar.

Boars that are no longer useful in the breeding program may be castrated to remove the boar odor before they are marketed. By the time the castration wound has healed, the odor usually disappears enough to allow the boar to be marketed.

In this country female swine usually are not castrated.

TIME TO CASTRATE

Swine may be castrated at any season of the year. Castrating pigs as early as possible lessens the interruption in their growth.

A good time for castrating young pigs is about 2 to 6 weeks of age. At this age, pigs can be more easily handled, the operation is less difficult to perform, and wounds heal faster.



N32309



N32313

Also, the quarters of nursing pigs are more sanitary than those of weaned pigs.

RESTRAINT

The best way to restrain, or hold, swine that are to be castrated depends on the age, size of the animal and the number of helpers available.

Two methods that may be used to hold young pigs are:

- Suspending the pig by his hindlegs with his back toward the helper. The helper clamps his knees against the pig's ribs, near the shoulders.
- Holding the pig on its back on top of a table. This requires two helpers. One helper grasps the front legs and the other helper grasps the rear legs; the person doing the castrating stands to one side of the pig.

A large boar can be restrained in several ways. No matter which way you choose, you must begin by snaring him about the upper jaw. Make certain that the snare is around the upper jaw and behind the tusks. Tie the free end of the snare to a post.

After the boar is securely snared, it can be restrained for castration by tying all four legs or by hoisting its hindlegs.

- Tie a boar with ropes to each of its legs. Then, throw the boar onto its side in a position for castration. Helpers can keep the boar in position with the ropes or the ropes can be tied to strong posts.



N32315



N32312

① Make the incision between the testicles as deep as a testicle is thick and twice as long as a testicle. ② Squeeze the first testicle out through the incision. ③ Pull the testicle lightly to stretch the cord. Place your knife (or a clean, single-edge razor blade) against the cord near the edge of the incision and cut the cord. ④ Make a smaller incision inside the main incision to expose the second testicle.

• Hoist a boar's hindlegs using a block and tackle. Pass a chain or rope around the boar's body just in front of his hindlegs to make a loop; fasten the loop to a pulley of the block and tackle. Hoist the boar until the hind feet are off the ground.

THE OPERATION

The first step is to make an incision in the scrotum—the pouch of skin containing the testicles. This may be done with one or two incisions. The one-incision method has the advantage of producing a single wound that usually is located for good drainage and rapid healing.

PROBLEMS IN CASTRATING

Most of the disorders in the reproductive organs of male swine are either undescended testicles or ruptures (scrotal hernias). When castrating a large number of pigs at one time, those with either of these conditions should be put aside and operated on separately. If possible, you should have a veterinarian repair a rupture or remove an undescended testicle.



N32316

Fasten the snare around the boar's upper jaw, behind his tusks.

If swine are clean and dry, no skin antiseptic is needed. When they are dirty and the operation cannot be postponed, wash the scrotal area and between the hindlegs with soapy water, using a coarse fiber brush.

After washing, the area may be disinfected with an antiseptic solution such as 2-percent solution of cresol.

Pigs

If the pig is held on its back, press the testicles downward toward the pig's navel to a position between the fleshy part of the hams.

If the pig is held up by its hindlegs, the testicles will slip into position between the fleshy part of the hams. Keep the testicles in position when making the incision by placing your fingers just above the testicles.

Cut directly between the testicles. Make the incision as deep as a testicle is thick and about twice as long as a testicle.

By squeezing with your thumb and forefinger, one testicle can usually be brought out through the incision. Sometimes it is necessary to make an additional incision inside the main incision to expose the first testicle. Hold the testicle with your thumb and forefinger when making this incision.

Pull lightly on the testicle to draw the cord out through the incision. Cut the cord near the edge of the incision.

Hold the second testicle with your thumb and forefinger and cut through the tissue that surrounds the testicle. This testicle can be brought out and its cord cut in the same way as the first testicle. Small pigs need no further treatment. The incision usually heals in 2 to 3 weeks.

SELLING UNCASTRATED BOARS

Many mature boars are sent to market uncastrated; they are sold to packing plants that can use meat from boar carcasses. If you are considering castrating a boar before selling him, check market prices. Often the loss in reduced price for an uncastrated boar is less than the cost of feed and labor in keeping a castrated boar until he is ready for market.

Boars

The one-incision method is less difficult for large boars than the two-incision method because the skin of the scrotum is not nearly as thick and tough along the midline as it is over the testicles.

To remove the boar's testicles, the incision must be made through the scrotum because the testicles will not slip down between the fleshy part of the hams as they do in a pig. Hold the scrotum with one hand, and make the incision with the other.

Start the incision between the testicles, at the middle of the scrotum and cut down to the bottom of the scrotum. Extend the incision beyond the edge of the scrotum. Make the incision large enough to remove the testicles and to provide good drainage.

By squeezing with one hand and pulling on the testicle and cord with your other hand, the testicle can be freed from its attachments in the scrotum. It is preferable to remove the testicle with its coverings intact.

However, if the covering is cut through and the testicle is exposed, continue the operation. If possible remove the testicle covering from the scrotum after the testicle is removed.

Usually, it is necessary to cut through the tissue dividing the scrotum to expose the second testicle. Then, the testicle can be removed in the same way as the first.

Boars usually need no further treatment. Their incisions usually take longer to heal than the incisions in pigs.

PRECAUTIONS

Following castration, most swine need no further treatment. However, if an animal has any unnatural swelling or appears sluggish, examine it carefully. If you feel it needs treatment, have it examined by your veterinarian.

Some of the complications that develop in castrated swine are peritonitis, hemorrhage, septicemia, and scirrhous cord. The best ways to prevent these conditions are:

- An incision located to give good drainage.
- Clean quarters for newly castrated pigs.
- Prompt attention when sluggishness or swelling occurs.
- Application of insect repellants when needed, especially in the fly season.

Prepared by

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